

Ages & Stages: How Children Grow & Learn



All children go through stages of growth and development. Their behaviors, and our reactions to them, are very important to their successful progress and learning. Knowing what to expect can help you guide children through these stages.

Birth to 6 Months

- Learns to tell speech from other sounds,
- Knows different faces/voices by 2 months,
- Learns to roll over and sits up with help,
- Responds to own name and smiles back,
- Shows happy/sad feelings—picks up on your mood,
- Lifts head to look around, and
- Grasps small objects.

6 to 9 months

- Looks for things dropped,
- Copies a few sounds and actions,
- Likes familiar routines,
- Plays by banging things and taking things out of containers,
- Sits on own and learns to crawl/scoot, and
- Babbles trying to show wants.



9 to 12 months

- Understands simple, familiar words,
- Babbles as if speaking—says mama/dada,
- Waves/kisses/points in response to others,
- Crawls/scoots well, and
- Spends longer time doing one thing.

1 to 3 years

- Starts scribbling, singing and naming,
- Copies sounds/actions more and better,
- Knows words and puts them together,
- Has temper fits and may grab/bite/hit,
- Wants more freedom—tests, but wants and needs limits,
- Discovers own interests and wants,
- Walks/runs/climbs—gets into everything,
- Drinks from cup, eats with spoon and helps dress and do chores, and

- Likes to imitate people and animals.

3 years to 6 years

- Expresses definite likes and dislikes,
- Plays with others, takes turns and shares,
- Sings/dances simple routines,
- Plays dress-up to explore genders/roles,
- Asks “why” a lot—curious about nature,
- Rides/steers/pushes/pulls wheeled toys,
- Plays simple games, and
- Delights in learning/showing new skills.

Talking Points for Parents

- Tell parents every day about their child’s efforts and progress.
- Answer concerns about progress and stress that each child learns at their own rate.
- Ask parent help to solve behavior problems, using positive discipline at the right level for their child.
- Have a list to give parents of people and places where they can get information and help beyond what you can provide.

Your Role is Important

Young children are always learning about themselves and their world. Be aware of your impact on them: always set a good example in your words and actions.

You can help parents do their best by respectfully sharing what you know about child development and positive discipline, in ways they can use at home.

Resources: Healthy Child Care magazine:

877-258-6178 or www.healthychild.net

American Academy of Pediatrics:

toll-free 888-227-5409 or www.aap.org

Bright Futures Encounter Forms for Families:

www.brightfutures.org

Information consistent with Caring for Our Children 2002:

<http://nrc.uchsc.edu>